

# The Hanover Petroglyph Site (33-Li-56), Licking County, Ohio

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The earliest account of this important petroglyph site also appears to be the most complete and most accurate, that of J. H. Salisbury who, in 1859, traced the petroglyphs on muslin and prepared a report submitted to the American Antiquarian Society in 1863. An abstract of his report and a reduced drawing of the petroglyphs was published in the report of the Ohio State Board of Centennial Managers (1877). This drawing (Figure 1) of the "Newark Track Rock" remains the most accurate and complete description of the petroglyphs.

The site has been completely destroyed by highway construction along Route 16, about six miles east of Newark and one mile southwest of the abandoned town of Hanover. The petroglyphs were carved along the base of a high cliff of Black Hand sandstone on the north side of the highway.

In 1884, Daniel Brinton noted the petroglyph site in a brief article in which he suggested that the "cuspidiform" petroglyphs at this and other Ohio sites represent arrow heads rather than bird tracks. The Brinton article adds nothing, however, to the description of the site.

In April, 1955, Jere W. Frazer, of Columbus, visited the site, taking some polaroid photographs and making a few drawings and measurements now on file at The Ohio Historical Society (Figure 2). The site was at that time owned by the Pure Oil Company. Frazer's measurements of the human head (19.8 cm long) agree fairly well with those estimated from Salisbury's reduced drawing (21.6 cm). Unfortunately, none of his drawings of the arrows or bird tracks can be identified with those of Salisbury. His copies of various 19th century *graffiti*, the earliest date of which is 1810, confirms Salisbury's remark that "When Licking county was first visited by white settlers, about the year 1810, they frequently cut their names on this cliff, regardless of the inscriptions of their predecessors."

Shortly before the petroglyph site was destroyed by highway widening in 1964 or 1965, John Hunt, of Newark, visited the site, did some excavating along the base of the 30-40 foot high cliff, and, most importantly, quarried the two most unusual of the petroglyphs, a human hand and a human face. All of the remaining petroglyphs, as well as a

stone mound atop the cliff and the shelter midden lying at the base, were destroyed by subsequent activity of the Highway Department. The two salvaged petroglyphs now reside in the Licking County Historical Society museum in Newark.

Hunt's color polaroid photographs do not reproduce well, but remain the best available. Figure 3 shows the hand near the top of the cliff (Salisbury's group 2) and should include part of group 3 and possibly group 1. None of these can be clearly discerned, however. One wonders how closely this sculptured hand resembles the famous "Black Hand" carved on the face of Black Hand Rock, a short distance downstream on the opposite side of the Licking River, though there is no way of knowing, since that petroglyph was destroyed nearly 150 years ago with construction of the Ohio-Erie canal. As suggested by Frazer, the distinct depression in the center of the carved hand at Hanover may represent the common Late Prehistoric "hand and eye" motif.

Figure 4 is a distant view of the cliff after the two petroglyphs had been removed by Hunt. The hand was removed from the circular area near the center of the photograph, and the human face (Figure 5) was quarried from the square area to the lower right of the hand. Although there is some question about the authenticity of this petroglyph, particularly since it was not noted by Salisbury in his original description of the site, it is probably aboriginal.

Figure 5 contains Salisbury's groups 4 through 8, though none of groups 4 and 7 can be discerned in the photograph. Many of the arrow-like petroglyphs in his groups 5, 6, and 8 are visible, however, and indicate that his drawing is very accurate.

Brinton, D. G.

1884 On the cuspidiform petroglyphs, or so-called bird-track rock-sculptures, of Ohio. *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Vol. 36, p. 275-277.

Salisbury, J. H.

1877 Sculptured cliff near Newark, Ohio. P. 96-97 in *Final Report of the Ohio State Board of Centennial Managers to the General Assembly of the State of Ohio*. Columbus: Nevins & Myers.

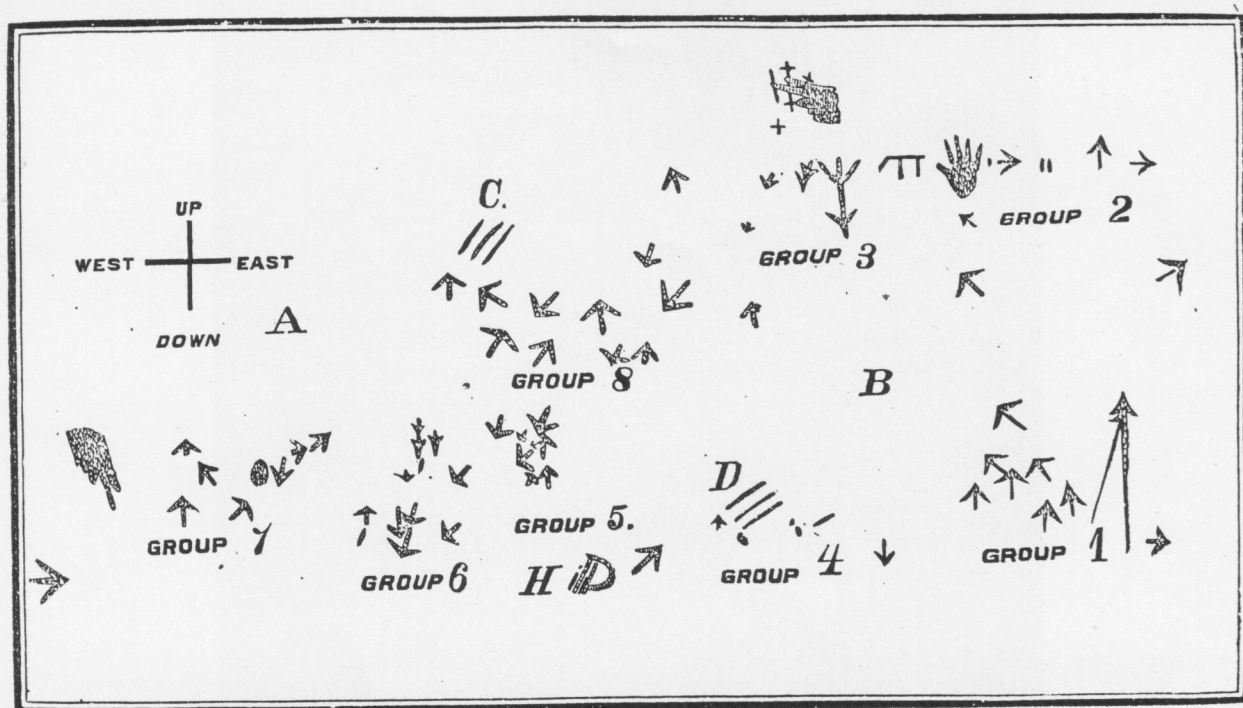
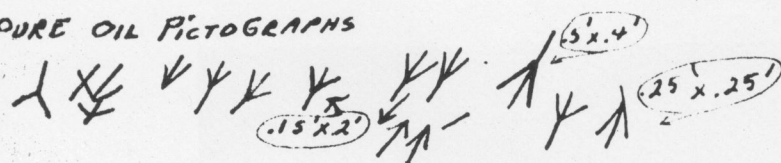


Fig. 1 (Murphy) Copy of Salisbury's original drawing of the Hanover petroglyphs or "Newark Track Rocks."

# PURE OIL PICTOGRAPHS



## BIRD TRACKS

VARY IN SIZE FROM  $.15 \times .2$  FT. TO  $.5 \times .4$  FT.

$.65'$  LONG  
 $.45'$  WIDE



RIGHT HAND  
DEEPLY CARVED  
HYPEREXTENDED  
THUMB

ELLIPTICAL DEPRESSION  
IN PALM.  
HAND-EYE SYMBOL?

$.4' \times .338'$



SMILING  
FACE

## NAMES AND DATES

CLOAR  
T.D.E.W.

J. WEEKS  
C. RANDOLPH

H.C. STEVENS I.P.S.  
E

WRS

ogtvi.vb^ 1897

KING

sy AXTEL 1820

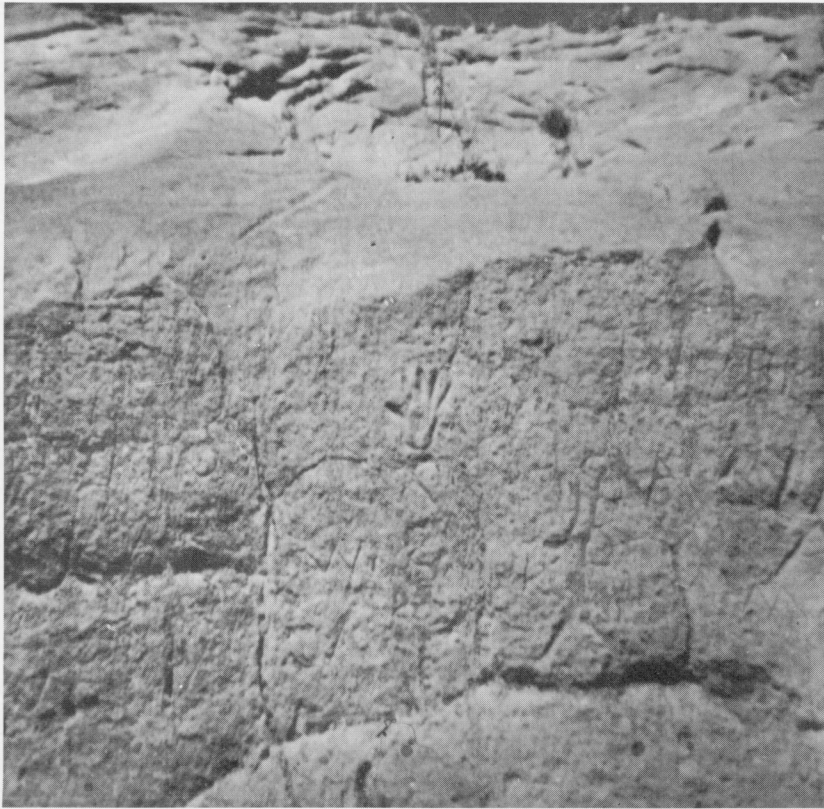
AB 1810

MR 186(5?)

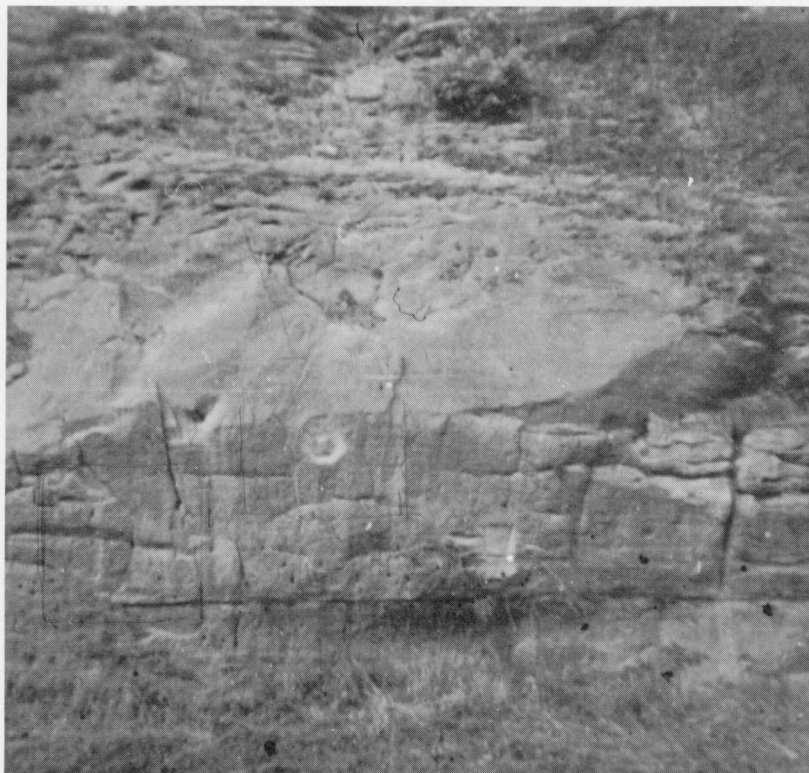
W. OWENS

L. SMITH

Fig. 2 (Murphy) Frazer's sketches of the "Pure Oil Company Pictographs," 1955.



*Fig. 3 (Murphy) Human hand petroglyph near the top of the cliff. From a color polaroid photograph by John Hunt.*

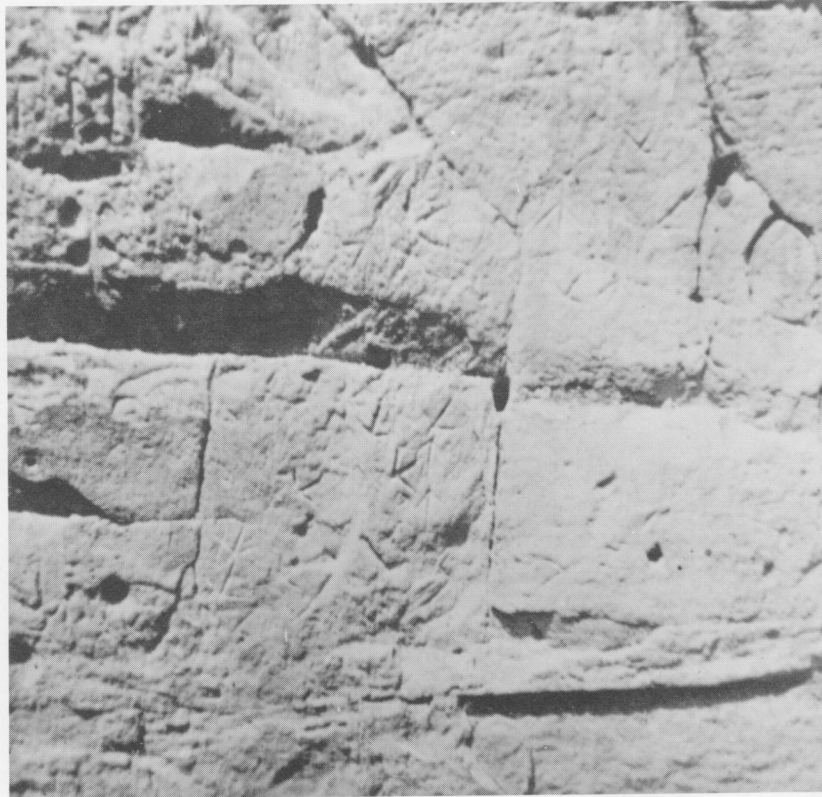


*Fig. 4 (Murphy) Distant view of the cliff showing location of quarried hand petroglyph (circle) and face petroglyph (square).*





*Fig. 5 (Murphy) Human face petroglyph.*



*Fig. 6 (Murphy) Arrow or bird track petroglyphs near the western end of the cliff.*